

Food & Fitness *December 2003*

Ways to Manage Stress During the Holidays

❄ Set Priorities

- Try not to overextend yourself. It's not necessary to attend every party and celebration. Learn to say "no" gently but firmly to social events over your limit.
- If possible, share responsibilities for cooking and baking with friends or family members.



❄ Plan Ahead

- Make a list of things to do and set aside some time each day to accomplish them.
- Set realistic goals. If all of your holiday goals can't be met, there's always next year.



❄ Keep It Simple

- A holiday feast doesn't have to be elaborate to be memorable.
- Consider hosting a potluck meal and have guests provide some of the dishes.
- Take advantage of gift wrapping services, shopping from mail order catalogues and the Internet.
- Remember that the holidays are a time to celebrate with friends and family.

❄ Establish A Holiday Budget

- Consider establishing a budget for the holidays and try to stick with it.
- Think about coming up with simple, thoughtful or useful gift ideas.
- Creative hand-made gifts and baked goods can also be a low-cost alternative.



❄ Avoid Riding an Emotional Roller Coaster

- If family gatherings are stressful, limit the amount of time spent at each visit.
- Be willing to let go of old traditions if they no longer work for your family and find new ones.

❄ Take Care of Yourself

- Counter the holiday pressures by giving your self some time for rest and renewal each day.
- Think about what the holidays are actually celebrating and try to stay true to that spirit.

Surviving the Stresses of the Season

- ❄ Be realistic about your expectations.
- ❄ Involve yourself in activities you enjoy.
- ❄ Avoid letting your emotions get the best of you.
- ❄ Don't be afraid to start new traditions.
- ❄ Remember that you can't control other people's behaviors or situations.



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Maintaining Your Weight During the Holidays

Set Realistic Goals

- Understand that dieting during the holidays can be challenging.
- Most people gain 6-8 lbs. during the holidays. Strive to maintain your current weight.



Smart Holiday Eating

- 1) Plan ahead for social gatherings. By eating a light meal or snack before going to a party, you may be less tempted to snack on unhealthy foods.
- 2) Concentrate on interacting with family and friends and enjoying the festive surroundings, instead of the types of food and drink at parties. Keeping involved in conversation can distract you from snacking and drinking when you are not hungry or thirsty.
- 3) Enjoy eating fresh fruits and vegetables. Take smaller servings of high fat dips and rich desserts.
- 4) Portion size is important. Try using a salad plate instead of a dinner plate in the buffet line.
- 5) Drink 1 to 2 glasses of water or a low calorie beverage before eating.
- 6) If you are asked to bring food or snacks to the party, try making them low calorie and low fat.
- 7) Limit your alcohol intake. Alcohol increases your appetite and is high in calories.

When Entertaining

- Provide low fat alternatives, such as popcorn, pretzels, vegetables, and low fat dips.
- Check the content of your holiday recipes for amounts of fat and sugar, and try using healthy substitutes like applesauce instead of vegetable shortening in baked goods.
- Chew sugarless gum during holiday cooking and baking. It can help deter constant taste testing.

When Eating At The Mall

- Make healthy choices by eating a baked potato instead of french fries.
- Try eating grilled chicken instead of a double cheeseburger.
- Remember that fat-free yogurt is a tasty and healthy alternative for whole ice cream.



Maintain Your Exercise Program During The Holidays

- Exercise will help burn some of the extra calories you eat.
- Exercise can help reduce your appetite.
- Regular exercise can also help reduce your stress level.

